
From: Matley, Ted (FTA)
To: Zelasko, Elizabeth (FTA); Sukys, Raymond (FTA); Marler, Renee (FTA); Carranza, Edward (FTA); Rogers, Leslie (FTA); Sinquefield, Robyn (FTA); VanWyk, Christopher (FTA); Bausch, Carl (FTA)
Sent: 11/5/2010 6:32:49 AM
Subject: FW: FTA article: Gov-elect in Hawaii said current governor is using EIS as an excuse to impede Honolulu's project

FYI

From: Luden, Hymie (FTA)
Sent: Fri 11/5/2010 8:47 AM
Subject: FTA article: Gov-elect in Hawaii said current governor is using EIS as an excuse to impede Honolulu's project

Abercrombie to weigh rail EIS

The environmental review does not hinge on a financial report, the governor-elect says

[By Derrick DePledge](#)

Star Advertiser

Nov 05, 2010

Gov.-elect Neil Abercrombie said yesterday he would not wait for an independent financial analysis to determine whether to sign the environmental impact statement on Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail project.

Abercrombie said the role of the governor is to decide whether the environmental review was conducted properly, not to weigh in on the finances or the merits of the project, which he believes is the city's responsibility.

"I'll look at it, but the governor really doesn't decide that," Abercrombie, a rail supporter, said of a financial analysis after a news conference on his transition plans. "That's decided by the City Council, the mayor and the Federal Transit Administration. Honest, that's the way it works."

Gov. Linda Lingle ordered the \$300,000 financial analysis in September to determine whether the rail project is feasible given the economic downturn. She said she wanted an objective assessment because the project is being financed by taxpayers as well as the federal government.

Infrastructure Management Group Inc. and CB Richard Ellis are preparing the financial analysis and are expected to be finished by December.

The environmental impact statement is being reviewed by the state Office of Environmental Quality Control and has yet to reach the governor's desk. Lingle has said she would share the financial analysis and leave the decision on whether to sign the environmental review for the next governor.

Abercrombie said he does not believe the Republican takeover of the U.S. House will have an influence on federal money for rail. U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee -- who had promised to support rail in Honolulu, lost his re-election bid on Tuesday.

Abercrombie said the FTA would decide whether the rail project is worthy. Congress, he said, would make funding decisions based on whether projects are viable and there are dollars available, not on whether Republicans or Democrats are in control.

Abercrombie announced a transition website -- [NewDayHawaii.org](#) -- and urged those interested in jobs in his Cabinet or administration to apply by Nov. 15. Bill Kaneko, Abercrombie's campaign manager, is the transition director.

The governor-elect is scheduled to be sworn in Dec. 6. One of his first responsibilities will be to submit a draft two-year budget to the state Legislature by late December. The budget will likely be similar to the spending plan in place now, since he will only be in office for a few weeks before it is due and can work with state lawmakers to put his stamp on the budget.

during session.

"I won't start from scratch," he said. "I have every confidence that what has been presented to the Legislature by the professionals that are working in the administration forms a good foundation. Now, the direction we go in, and the allocation of funds, and the priorities and so on, obviously are something we have to take responsibility for."

Abercrombie said he has not met with Lingle about the transition, but hopes to soon. He has also yet to speak with President Barack Obama since his victory but has spoken with Valerie Jarrett, a White House senior adviser and assistant to the president for intergovernmental affairs and public engagement. He said he and other new governors expect to meet with Obama in Washington, D.C., in early December.

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